WORLD

Red Cross official calls slaying of workers 'vile, cowardly act'

MASSACRE: *Coffins of six slain arrive in Geneva; survivors too upset to speak with reporters*

GENEVA, Switzerland (AP) — Pale and weeping, the 14 survivors of a hospital massacre in Chechnya linked arms and stood silently on the airport tarmac next to the six coffins of their slain colleagues.

The bodies of the six Red Cross workers arrived today in Geneva, where the victims' relatives and friends joined the survivors for an impromptu ceremony. A Red Cross flag was draped over each coffin, a flower placed on top.

"We all have to work so that the meaning of this tragedy will at least be to ensure that the mission of the ICRC and the emblem of the Red Cross are better known and understood," Cornelio Sommaruga, president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, told the small gathering, which included ambassadors from the countries of the slain workers.

Sommaruga called Tuesday's predawn shooting at a field hospital south of the Chechen capital a "vile and cowardly act."

The 14 survivors said they were too upset to speak with reporters today. But the head of the ICRC medical department, Bruce Eshaya Chauvin, told a press conference that the group had been awakened at about 4 a.m. to what sounded like gunfire.

One delegate reported hearing a kick against his door, Chauvin said, and thought he was going to be taken hostage. But then the noise vanished.

One by one they discovered their friends murdered in their beds. "The difference between those who were killed and the survivors is they locked their doors," he said.

The motive for the murders and the identity of the killers remains unknown. The head of the separatist republic and Russian President Boris Yeltsin lamented the incident, and suggested Wednesday that the killings were an effort to sabotage a peace agreement that has held since August, following almost two years of fighting in Chechnya.

"This is a national catastrophe for us," said Aslan Maskhadov, head of Chechnya's coalition government. "Such a thing could be done only by renegades who fiercely hate not only the Chechen people but all humankind."

Maskhadov, the rebels' military chief during the 20-month war, said Chechen officials would do everything possible to bring the killers to justice.

The United Nations announced it was suspending refugee operations in the Chechnya area in response to the slayings. U.N. Spokesman Sylvana Foa said the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees has about 14 international staff and 30 Chechens helping the estimated 80,000 people displaced by the war.

The Red Cross already has suspended its work in the breakaway republic and evacuated 35 workers. Only five Red Cross workers remained to help with the investigation.

"The Red Cross has had experience in many war zones of the world, and we must say that Chechnya has proved to be one of the most difficult," Victoria Catliff, an agency spokeswoman in Moscow, said Wednesday. "The respect for the Red Cross and for humanitarian organizations in general has not prevailed."

FOR YOUR INTEREST / ENTERTAINMENT

ADVICE: *Dear Abby*

Courtroom drama can often be a funny affair

■ **DEAR ABBY**: I read your quotes from the courts of law a few days ago and got a big laugh from them. But did you know that actions can speak louder than words, even in a courtroom?

My grandfather, John M. Killits, was a district federal court judge in the 1930s, and a local

publicly, so my lawyer filed on the grounds that we had been separated for one year.

It turns out that my lawyer's wife is a terrible gossip. She discussed the problems in my marriage with anyone who would listen. (I understand that I am not the only client she has talked about.)

I am devastated. Now the whole town knows. I am sickened that our children will hear the things from

'English Patient' tops Golden Globe picks

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP) — "The English Patient" collected a leading seven nominations today for Golden Globe Awards, regarded as a precursor to Oscar contenders.

Three other films collected five nominations apiece: "The People vs. Larry Flynt," "Shine" and "Evita."

Among the acting nominees were music stars Madonna, Courtney Love and Barbra Streisand, as well as Mel Gibson, Tom Cruise, Eddie Murphy and Antonio Banderas.

The predawn announcement at a Beverly Hilton Hotel was designed to accommodate East Coast-based morning television newscasts.

NBC-TV will broadcast the awards show on Jan. 19.

Dramatic picture nominees were "Breaking the Waves," "The English Patient," "The People vs. Larry Flynt," "Secrets & Lies" and "Shine."

Nominated for best musical or comedy motion picture were "The Birdcage," "Everyone Says I Love You," "Evita," "Fargo" and "Jerry Maguire."

An honorary award will be given to Dustin Hoffman.

There are about 90 members of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association. Unlike the Academy Awards, the Golden Globes, now in their 54th year, divide films into categories of drama and musical or comedy.

The group also gives out TV awards.

Dramatic actress nominees were Brenda Blethyn for "Secrets & Lies," Love for "The People vs. Larry Flynt," Meryl Streep for "Marvin's Room," Kristin Scott Thomas for "The English Patient" and Emily Watson for "Breaking the Waves."

Actors in that category were Ralph Fiennes for "The English Patient," Gibson for "Ransom," Woody Harrelson for "The People vs. Larry Flynt," Liam Neeson for "Michael Collins" and Geoffrey Rush for "Shine."

Actresses receiving bids for their leading roles in a musical or comedy were Glenn Close for "101 Dalmatians," Madonna for "Evita," Frances McDormand for "Fargo," Debbie Reynolds for "Mother" and Streisand for "The Mirror Has Two Faces."

Actors in the musical or comedy film category were Banderas for "Evita," Kevin Costner for "Tin Cup," Cruise for "Jerry Maguire," Nathan Lane for "The Birdcage" and Murphy for "The Nutty Professor."